

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Presently Amended) A surgical instrument comprising an instrument handle linked to a proximal end portion of a tube shaft, the tube shaft having a distal end portion linked to an instrument head, so as to allow the instrument head to bend relative to the tube shaft, the instrument head further comprising a rotatably supported effector having at least one pivotable engaging element, the instrument handle having a plurality of manipulators and/or operating mechanisms for operating the instrument head and/or the effector, wherein a first manipulator further comprises an operating element having the shape of a rotary knob and being rotatably supported on the instrument handle, and wherein the instrument handle is pivotally supported at the tube shaft via a pivot shaft, such that the instrument handle is aligned so as to be laterally offset with respect to the tube shaft.

2. (Presently Amended) A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the instrument handle ~~is pivotally linked to the tube shaft at the proximal end portion and~~ forms an operating mechanism for bending the instrument head with respect to the tube shaft.

3. (Presently Amended) A surgical instrument according to claim 2, ~~wherein the instrument handle is pivotally supported at the tube shaft via a pivot shaft, and wherein the instrument handle is aligned so as to be laterally offset with respect to the tube shaft and is, thus, wherein~~ the instrument handle is constructively pivotable past a parallel position with respect to the tube shaft.

4. (Presently Amended) A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the first manipulator in the shape of a rotary knob is rotatably arranged at a distal end portion of a handle member of the instrument handle and ~~is preferably~~ wherein the first manipulator is inclined with respect to the longitudinal axis of the instrument handle.
5. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 4, wherein the inclination of the rotary knob relative to the instrument handle is at an angle of approximately 20° to 25°.
6. (Presently Amended) A surgical instrument according to claim 2, wherein the first manipulator in the shape of a rotary knob is rotatably arranged at a distal end portion of a handle member of the instrument handle and ~~is preferably~~ wherein the first manipulator is inclined with respect to the longitudinal axis of the instrument handle.
7. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the first manipulator forms the distal tip of the instrument handle.
8. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 7, wherein the first manipulator is adapted to be operated by the fingers of a human hand.
9. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the first manipulator is operatively connected, via a gear train, to the effector.
10. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 9, wherein rotation of the first manipulator rotates the gear train which rotates the effector relative to the instrument head.

11. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein a lever-shaped manipulator is arranged at a longitudinal side of the instrument handle and is pivotable relative to the instrument handle and operatively connected, via a gear train, to the effector.
12. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 11, wherein the lever-shaped manipulator is adapted to operate the effector.
13. (Original) A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the instrument handle has an ergonomically shaped handle member on which the manipulators and/or operating mechanisms of the instrument handle are supported.
14. (New) A surgical instrument comprising an instrument handle linked to a proximal end portion of a tube shaft, the tube shaft having a distal end portion linked to an instrument head, so as to allow the instrument head to bend relative to the tube shaft, the instrument head further comprising a rotatably supported effector having at least one pivotable engaging element, the instrument handle having a plurality of manipulators and/or operating mechanisms for operating the instrument head and/or the effector, wherein a first manipulator further comprises an operating element having the shape of a rotary knob and being rotatably supported on the instrument handle, wherein the instrument handle is pivotably linked to the tube shaft at the proximal end portion and forms an operating mechanism for bending the instrument head with respect to the tube shaft, and wherein the first manipulator in the shape of a rotary knob is rotatably arranged at a distal, free end portion of a handle member of the instrument handle which distal end portion is located opposite to the linkage with the tube shaft.